

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SCUL, SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR USG ASSISTANCE FROM ARGENTINE HARE KRISHNA CULT

REF: BUENOS AIRES 1094

1. ARGENTINE NATIONAL PEDRO SZARAZGAT, WHO IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS SPOKESMAN FOR ARGENTINA BRANCH OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE CONSCIENCE OF KRISHNA, APPROACHED BUENOS AIRES HERALD EDITOR ROBERT COX ON APRIL 18 TO ASK HIS GOOD OFFICES IN SECURING APPOINTMENT TO SPEAK WITH AMERICAN EMBASSY OFFICIAL. APPOINTMENT WAS ARRANGED WITH POLITICAL OFFICER FOR SAME DAY.

2. SZARAZGAT TOLD EMBOFF THAT WITH GOA BANNING OF SECT IN JANUARY (REFTEL PARA 4) ITS STOCKS OF PRINTED MATTER WERE PLACED UNDER SEAL. THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THIS STOCK IS 20,000 BOOKS AND SOME 45,000 MAGAZINES. SECT IS CONSIDERING ACTION SUCH AS COURT APPEALS ON BAN ITSELF, BUT IN MEANTIME WANTS TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF LITERATURE FOR EXPORT AND USE IN OTHER (SPANISH-SPEAKING) COUNTRIES. SZARAZGAT ASKED USG TO INTERVENE ON SECT'S BEHALF WITH GOA TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF LITERATURE.

3. EMBOFF DETERMINED THAT SECT IS INCORPORATED IN ARGENTINA; THAT THERE ARE NO AMERICAN CITIZENS AMONG ITS LOCAL OFFICERS
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OR ASSOCIATED WITH IT; THAT THE PRINTED MATERIAL IS PROPERTY OF THE LOCAL SECT AND NOT OF ANY AMERICAN INSTITUTION OR INDIVIDUAL; AND THAT THE INDIVIDUAL HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE SECT'S MEMBERS IN ARGENTINA ARE NOT BEING DIRECTLY ABUSED. MEMBERS HAVE NOT BEEN MOLESTED IN THEIR MEETINGS IN PRIVATE HOMES OR OTHERWISE DISTURBED OTHER THAN TO BE PROHIBITED FROM PUBLIC MANIFESTATIONS OR PROSELYTIZING. THE SECT HAS NOT YET RESORTED

TO LEGAL ACTION IN THE ARGENTINE COURTS. SZARAZGAT WAS THEREFORE TOLD THAT IT DID NOT APPEAR THAT USG HAD GROUNDS FOR FORMAL INTERVENTION WITH THE GOA. HOWEVER, EMBOFF SAID THAT CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN TO INCLUDING DIFFICULTIES OF SECT IN INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS WITH GOA SUCH AS HAS BEEN DONE FOR EXAMPLE WITH THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES. IT WAS ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE US OFFICES OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT MIGHT TAKE UP THE SITUATION WITH THE ARGENTINE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON.

4. WE HAVE ALSO RECEIVED A LETTER DATED MARCH 28 FROM HOWARD J. RESNICK, DIRECTOR, SPANISH DIVISION, SHAKTIVEDANTA BOOK TRUST, ON THE LETTERHEAD OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS, 10310 OAKLYN ROAD, POTOMAC, MARYLAND 20854, ADDRESSED TO COMMERCIAL ATTACHE PETER JONES. RESNICK STATES THAT \$20,000 WORTH OF BOOKS AND MAGAZINES IS IMPOUNDED BY GOA, AND ASKS US TO MAKE INVESTIGATION, TRY TO HALT ANY DESTRUCTION OF THE BOOKS, AND OBTAIN PERMISSION TO EXPORT THEM. HE REFERS TO "OUR" BOOKS, BUT DOES NOT INDICATE OR DOCUMENT LEGAL STATUS OR OWNERSHIP. HE WRITES THAT HE HAS BEEN IN COMMUNICATION WITH MR. VAN TREECK OF ARA IN DEPT, WHO REFERRED HIM TO EMBASSY.

5. BASED UPON INFORMATION AVAILABLE AND OUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE SITUATION OF THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THERE IS A BASIS FOR USG INTERVENTION WITH GOA ON BEHALF OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT. IF APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITIES ARISE IN CONVERSATIONS WITH GOA OFFICIALS CONCERNING GENERAL DIFFICULTIES OF GOA WITH ITS IMAGE ABROAD, WE WILL INCLUDE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT AS ONE OF EXAMPLES OF TREATMENT OF RELIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GIOUS GROUPS IN ARGENTINE WHICH REGARDLESS OF ITS JUSTIFICATION OF MOTIVATION DOES LITTLE TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION.

6. EMBASSY IS REPLYING TO RESNICK IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARA 5 AND WILL RECOMMEND THAT OWNERS OF BOOKS SEEK REMEDY IN ARGENTINE COURTS.
HILL

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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